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Microsoft Windows XP SP3 and Office 2003 Support Ends April 8, 2014

Support for Windows XP SP3 and Office 2003 is ending on April 8, 2014. This means you should take action now. After April 8, 2014, there will be no new security updates, non-security hotfixes, free or paid assisted support options or online technical content updates.

Running Windows XP SP3 and Office 2003 in your environment after their end of support date may expose you to potential risks, such as:

Security & Compliance Risks: Unsupported and unpatched environments are vulnerable to security risks. This may result in an officially recognized control failure by an internal or external audit body, leading to suspension of certifications, and/or public notification of the organization's inability to maintain its systems.

Lack of Independent Software Vendor (ISV) & Hardware Manufacturers support: A recent industry report from Gartner Research suggests "many independent software vendors (ISVs) are unlikely to support new versions of applications on Windows XP in 2011; in 2012, it will become common." And it may stifle access to hardware innovation: Gartner Research further notes that in 2012, most PC hardware manufacturers will stop supporting Windows XP on the majority of their new PC models.

What can you do as it relates to the end of support for Windows XP SP3? Windows 8.1 provides the path to a more efficient and maintained Operating System platform. Furthermore, Microsoft has many solutions to help you migrate from Windows XP to a supported platform. These solutions include the following:

Microsoft Tools for Application Capability: Microsoft provides a broad range of tools if application compatibility is hindering you from migrating to a modern version of Windows. Among these tools include the Windows Program Compatibility Mode feature and the Microsoft Application Compatibility Toolkit (ACT). Leveraging these capabilities can resolve most of the common issue that prohibit earlier versions of programs from working correctly on current versions of Windows. The Microsoft Deployment Toolkit (MDT) is a great resource for upgrade and deployment guidance and can be found at: www.microsoft.com/mdt Depending on your needs, Microsoft can also assist you in resolving these issues with other application compatibility technologies such as leveraging application compatibility shims, etc. Please contact your Microsoft Representative for more information on these capabilities and tools.

Virtualization: Microsoft provides the ability to run Windows XP and legacy applications via Terminal Services on top of Windows Server 2003 R2. This is not a permanent fix since Windows Server 2003 R2 is going end of Life in 2015, but this does secure the desktop and provide you with an additional 15 months to find replacements or upgraded versions of applications that won't run on modern Windows.

Hardware Readiness: Aging hardware can be a key barrier to upgrading to a modern and supported PC operating environment. Recent analyst's findings from IDC show the high cost associated of running on antiquated hardware and software due to higher levels of downtime, loss of productivity and security issues. One alternative could allow for Windows 7 to be run on older hardware in a thin client environment. For example, Windows Thin PC (WinTPC) (www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/enterprise/products-and-technologies/virtualization/thinpc.aspx) is a low footprint, locked down version of Windows 7 which lets organizations repurpose existing legacy hardware as

thin clients. These client can continue to provide productive value by connecting remotely with virtual desktop and virtual application services.

To ensure you remain on supported versions of Windows and Office, you should begin your planning and application testing immediately. Microsoft has many tools and programs that can assist you in this effort.